



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett
Southern District of Indiana

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CONTACT: TIM HORTY

(317) 229-2409

tim.horty@usdoj.gov

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DONATES MORE THAN 100 PAIRS OF SHOES SEIZED FROM LOCAL DRUG DEALER

U.S. Attorney says donation to Vanderburgh County Sheriff is part of "Operation Goodwill"

PRESS RELEASE

EVANSVILLE – United States Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett, joined by Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge Dennis Wichern and U.S. Marshal Kerry Forestal, today presented more than one-hundred pairs of designer shoes to Vanderburgh County Sheriff Eric Williams as part of what federal authorities have dubbed "Operation Goodwill." The shoes were seized from an Evansville drug dealer, and will be distributed by Sheriff Williams through the Evansville-Vanderburgh County School Corporation's PTA Clothing Bank program.

"This program is a true win-win – it saves Hoosier tax dollars, and it will help strengthen community efforts here in Evansville designed to keep drugs out of our schools," Hogsett said. "I believe it also sends an important message that if you engage in criminal behavior such as drug dealing, you will be caught, and your ill-gotten gains will be taken away from you."

On November 22, 2010, members of the Evansville Police Department executed a search warrant at the residence of Seth Merrick, on Greenfield Road in Evansville. Merrick was arrested for his involvement in the trafficking of hundreds of pounds of marijuana in the Evansville area, and law enforcement seized 115 pairs of designer shoes, all of which were unworn and in boxes.

Merrick, who had prior drug convictions from 2001 and 2005, was convicted and sentenced in May 2011 to two years of incarceration. His prosecution was the result of an investigation by the DEA's Evansville Task Force, which includes members of the Evansville Police Department, the Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Office, the Vincennes Police Department, the Daviess County Sheriff's Office, and the Indiana State Police.

Subsequently, Hogsett, Wichern, and Forestal proposed to transfer the seized shoes to Sheriff Williams as part of "Operation Goodwill," a fifteen year-old federal program designed to build goodwill between law enforcement in the community. This proposal was accepted, and the Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Office plans to distribute the shoes throughout the community to youths in need in conjunction with the PTA Clothing Bank program.

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